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FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

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NORTON GETS FIRST FEDERAL RACIAL PROFILING AND D.C. FUNDING PRIORITIES IN FINAL TRANSPORTATION BILL

Washington, DC—Congresswoman Eleanor Holmes Norton (D-DC), a senior member of the Transportation and Infrastructure Committee and its Conference Committee, said that she was “both relieved and delighted” that, despite many cuts in the conference report, she was able to get most of her priorities included in the Safe, Accountable, Flexible, Efficient Transportation Equity Act (SAFETEA-LU), which was passed by the House today, including the first racial profiling provision in federal law. The bill has a total of \$143 million for critical bridge and infrastructure needs of the District of Columbia, including \$123 million for rehabilitation of the South Capitol Street/Frederick Douglass Memorial Bridge; \$17.6 million for upgrade of the 11th Street Bridge and construction of new ramps for traffic access to M Street, the site of many of Norton’s economic development projects, and several blocks of new office buildings; and \$1.6 million to continue construction of the Metro Branch Trail for bikers and pedestrians along the Red Line subway and \$800,000 to study the feasibility of a new Rock Creek Park bike and walking trail along Beach Drive, both, Norton environmental priorities.

The Norton racial profiling provision allows states to apply for \$60 million in federal funds to develop racial profiling laws, to maintain racial data on vehicle stops by police, and to train law enforcement officers so that they do not make stops on the basis of race. The Norton provision contains tough requirements for qualifying for the federal grant funding, including a state law prohibiting the use of race or ethnicity of drivers or passengers as a basis for traffic stops.

Topping Norton’s funding priorities were D.C.’s deteriorating bridges and tunnels because of the twin concerns of economic development and homeland security access that they represent to the city and region. The South Capitol Street/Frederick Douglass Bridge and 11th Street Bridges are among the oldest and most heavily used in the nation’s transportation system. The Congresswoman’s strategy also was to link SAFETEA-LU funding to her major infrastructure projects approved by the Congress, including the new Department of Transportation headquarters and the Southeast Federal Center, both now underway, as well as to the city’s plans, including the new baseball stadium and the Anacostia Waterfront Initiative.

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Renovation of the South Capitol Street/Frederick Douglass Bridge, which carries more than 70,000 vehicle trips per day, is key to the development of a new South Capitol Street corridor to match South Capitol to its counterparts going in each direction, as the L’Enfant Plan intended. Norton got \$115 million for the South Capitol Street Bridge project and Rep. Steny Hoyer (D-MD) got \$8 million for a grand total of \$123 million, more than initially expected. Last week when member projects were cut across the board, the \$40 million she initially got for the South Capitol Street Bridge was reduced to \$32 million and the \$32 million for the 11th Street Bridge was reduced to \$25.6 million. Because South Capitol is a priority, she shifted money from the 11th Street Bridge to the South Capitol Street Bridge to get back the \$40 million. Norton then went to Ranking Member Jim Oberstar (D-MN) to get help in tapping \$75 million from funding for the National Corridor Infrastructure Improvement Program. The District of Columbia will use parking revenue funding to make up the difference for the 11th Street Bridge.

Improvements in these locations will provide connections to the Southeast Federal Center, Navy Yard, Fort McNair and Andrews and Bolling Air Force Bases, will reduce the negative impact of traffic congestion on nearby neighborhoods, and will help balance vehicular, transit, bicycling and pedestrian modes of travel. The 11th Street Bridge Project provides critical links to the District’s transportation network, carrying an average of 86,000 vehicle trips per day. Multi-modal improvements that will be a part of the new 11th Street Bridge improvements include transit connections and pedestrian and bicycle lanes. By improving the connections between the SE/SW Freeway and I-295, these improvements also will provide alternative connections to the surrounding region, reducing reliance on individual entry points such as the 14th Street Bridges and New York Avenue corridor to match South Capitol to its counterparts going in

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Norton recommended the Rock Creek Trail as an alternative to shutting down Beach Driveto vehicles, a plan some residents and environmentalists proposed that drew objections from Ward 4 and Ward 3 residents.to vehicles, a plan some residents and environmentalists proposed that drew objections from Ward 4 and Ward 3 residents.

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